

Desk Supplies - general

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# Curios and Relics

## Desk Supplies

### General Desk Supplies

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

# LINCOLN LORE

No. 172

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

July 25, 1932

## LINCOLN LORE

BULLETIN OF  
THE LINCOLN  
HISTORICAL  
RESEARCH  
FOUNDATION



ENDOWED BY  
THE LINCOLN  
NATIONAL LIFE  
INSURANCE  
COMPANY

Dr. Louis A. Warren - - - Editor

### LINCOLN'S OFFICE EQUIPMENT

With the possible exception of Lincoln's wearing apparel nothing intimately associated with him has caused more interest among those collecting Lincoln curios than the furniture and desk pieces which were used in his activities as lawyer and president. A list of some of these curios follows:

#### *Bookcase*

The bookcase which was used by Lincoln in his Springfield, Illinois law office was in the possession of the Lincoln Memorial Collection in Chicago.

#### *Chairs*

The chair used by Lincoln in his office at Springfield, formerly in the Lambert collection, is a revolving arm-chair of rather crude design, and shows evidences of much use. A portrait of Lincoln has been set into the back at a comparatively recent date. This chair has been vouched for by Mr. Herndon as the chair used by Lincoln during his active partnership with him in Springfield. This was not a general office chair, but the one used by Lincoln habitually at his desk.

Another chair used by Lincoln in the law office of Lincoln and Herndon in Springfield, said to have been made by Lincoln himself although this is not certain, was presented to the Dayton Museum along with an explanatory letter by J. A. Rhinberger from Flora, Illinois under date of October 9, 1892. He says he got the chair in 1858 as Mr. Herndon did not want it in his office and when he moved from Springfield to Flora gave it to Esquire McGannon, a Springfield neighbor, because it was too heavy to move.

A hickory chair in which Lincoln used to stretch his gaunt frame when he was yet a small town lawyer in Illinois is now in the possession of the Philadelphia Historical Society.

#### *Desks*

The old wardrobe desk in which Lincoln kept his books and papers has a cupboard bookcase at the top (the doors designed to protect the books from dust). A desk space is below the shelves and three deep drawers are at the bottom, two of which are fitted with large glass knobs. The wood was cut by Lincoln, William Grady and Coleman Gaines' son. It was left to season before an old man that lived with the Gaines' made it into this desk.

A black walnut desk, said to have been used by Abraham Lincoln while he practiced law at Bloomington, Illinois, is rough hewn and unfinished as it was when acquired in the store of a

second-hand dealer by the present owner's father. While this might call forth some doubt as to its authenticity it is said to have been traced from the old Court house at Bloomington. It is four feet high, half as wide and as long across the top, and has two drawers under the writing top. Held together with wooden pegs, it might have been hewn from one piece of timber so staunch is its construction.

At Bloomington Lincoln won one of his first important cases. It is believed that he bent over this desk as he prepared his defense.

A walnut desk upon which President-elect Lincoln wrote his First Inaugural address, February, 1861, is the property of a Springfield family and was on exhibition in the Centennial Memorial Building in the Illinois Historical Library.

A wild cherry desk said to have been made by the Lincolns is now in the possession of a desk company for advertising purposes.

#### *Inkstands*

This inkstand is of earthenware and originally had a series of decorations in gilt on the sides, most of which have disappeared. It is 2½ inches in height and 4¾ inches in diameter.

Until 1887 it remained in the possession of Lincoln's law partner, W. H. Herndon. It is well authenticated and was formerly in the Lambert collection.

The inkstand that Lincoln used in his law office in Springfield, Illinois was in the Lincoln Memorial Collection of Chicago.

A Wichita, Kansas girl claims to have the inkstand from which President Lincoln dipped the ink with which he signed the Emancipation Proclamation. She is the great granddaughter of a man, who was closely associated with the Lincoln family.

An inkwell three and one-half inches square and two and one-half inches deep, beautiful plate glass, with a well one and one-half inches in width and depth, has etched on one side "This inkstand was used by Abraham Lincoln while an attorney at Springfield" and on the opposite side "Used by Abraham Lincoln." It was purchased at a private auction sale by a Mechanicsburg, Illinois woman about twenty-five years ago.

A Wichita Falls, Texas family have an inkstand that tradition says belonged to Lincoln. There is a similar one in a collection in Chicago. They are about five inches in diameter and four inches tall and one was in every law office back in the fifties. This memento came from Jessie K. DuBois, a personal friend of Lincoln, and its authenticity is established by affidavits.

#### *Paperweight*

A paper weight which was on Lincoln's desk at the time of his assassination was acquired by Arthur F. Hall and presented to the Lincoln Historical Research Foundation at Fort

Wayne, Indiana. It is of metal consisting of a horse mounted on a pedestal. With it came an affidavit by William H. Tisdale, orderly to President Lincoln, concerning the authenticity of the relic. It was presented to Dr. S. Neumann, Veterinary Surgeon General of the Army of the Potomac, by Maj. Stackpole, steward at the White House at the time of the death of the president and was sold by Dr. Neumann's widow.

#### *Pens*

On February 27, 1929 at the Anderson Galleries, New York, a pen was sold for \$2,300. It is said to be the pen with which President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Affidavits accompanying the gold pen, which has a detachable wooden handle, say that it was given to Louis Burgdorf, White House messenger, who held the Proclamation when Lincoln signed it. It was sold by the messenger's grandson.

The announcement of the sale of the pen with which Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation brought protests from a woman of Battle Creek, Michigan, who is sure she has the original pen which was given to her grandfather by Mrs. Abraham Lincoln when they were neighbors on West Washington Boulevard in Chicago after the assassination of the President.

A third pen catalogued as that used by Lincoln in signing the Emancipation Proclamation was auctioned off in Philadelphia in 1924 for \$1,000.

A fourth, also called genuine, is said to exist in the west.

#### *Sign*

The old tin sign of the firm of Lincoln and Herndon hung in the old stairway for several years after Lincoln's death but was finally taken off by an unknown relic hunter.

#### *Table*

A solid walnut table which occupies a prominent place in the law office of an attorney was once used in the office of Stuart and Edwards in Springfield, Illinois. Here Lincoln sat on the edge of this table or sometimes sat on a chair and perched his feet on the table and discussed political affairs of the day with Stuart. The present owner's father studied law in this office and while there he met Mr. Lincoln, then a distinguished attorney and member of Congress.

The table is of walnut, two and one-half feet in height and three and one-half feet in length and contains one large drawer which is almost three feet in length.

Whether or not this table later occupied a place in the office of Stuart and Lincoln has not been definitely established but it is quite likely.

An old board table and other articles of furniture in the office of Lincoln and Herndon were literally whittled to pieces and carried away in bits by admirers of Lincoln who came in pilgrimages to the room where he had worked for so many years.





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## Lincoln-Herndon blotter shaker



**Creator:** unknown

**Location:** unknown

**Origin Date:** Unknown

**Materials:** wood

**Measurements:** overall: 3 1/4 in x x 3 in

**Item ID:** 71.2009.082.0008

**Holding Institution:** Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection, courtesy of the Indiana State Museum

**Available for Viewing:** No

**Category:** Three-dimensional Objects

### Description

Lincoln's walnut blotter shaker or sander features an hour-glass shaped body, a top that is shaped like a bowl with tiny holes punched out in a star design, and a hollowed base. The plug used to cork the base is missing. Shakers were filled with sand to sprinkle over letters and documents to absorb excess ink when writing. Please see 71.2009.082.0007-71.2009.082.0011 for all items from Lincoln-Herndon desk set. Part of The Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection, courtesy of the Indiana State Museum



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## Lincoln-Herndon inkwell



**Creator:** unknown

**Location:** unknown

**Origin Date:** Unknown

**Materials:** wood, glass

**Measurements:** overall: 3 in x x 3 in

**Item ID:** 71.2009.082.0011

**Holding Institution:** Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection, courtesy of the Indiana State Museum

**Available for Viewing:** No

**Category:** Three-dimensional Objects

### Description

Lincoln's walnut inkwell features a squat, cylindrical shape, a rolled top edge, six pen openings or holders of varying sizes around the top, and a glass reservoir in the center to hold ink. The bottom is plugged with wood or cork. The original catalog card indicates that the inkwell once included a cover which is currently missing. Please see 71.2009.082.0007-71.2009.0082.0011 for all items from Lincoln-Herndon desk set. Part of The Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection, courtesy of the Indiana State Museum



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## Lincoln-Herndon pen holder



**Creator:** unknown

**Location:** unknown

**Origin Date:** Unknown

**Materials:** wood

**Measurements:** overall: 6 in x x 2 3/8 in

**Item ID:** 71.2009.082.0007a-c

**Holding Institution:** Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection, courtesy of the Indiana State Museum

**Available for Viewing:** No

**Category:** Three-dimensional Objects

### Description

Walnut pen holder is cylindrical and features three parts: a) a hollow base with a 5/8" inset for the lid to fit over; b) a dome-shaped lid; c) a tear-drop-shaped knob or peg that fits into a hole at the center of the lid. Please see 71.2009.082.0007-71.2009.0082.0011 for all items from Lincoln-Herndon desk set. Part of The Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection, courtesy of the Indiana State Museum

*Curatorship of the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection is a joint venture between the Indiana State Museum and the Allen County Public Library, assuring a level of care, as well as public and scholarly usefulness, no single institution could match.*







